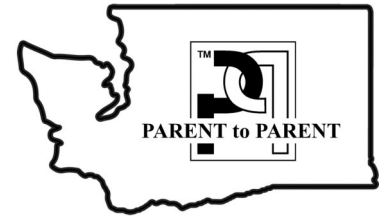


December 2021



Island County Parent to Parent Newsletter

“Planning for the Future” Virtual Presentations

Life after High School

with Jerri Clark from WA PAVE:

How, what, when to prepare for life after the yellow school bus stops coming.

IEP & the Transition Plan

December 7

6:00-7:30pm

This training provides key information for families to ensure that school-based services are providing what students with disabilities need to launch adult lives that meet their goals for further education, work, and independent living. Attention families with younger children: It's never too soon to start learning this information!

Email to RSVP t.wheeler-thompson@islandcountywa.gov

Did you know that if
you text 741741 when you're
feeling really depressed
or suicidal,
a crisis counselor
will text with you?
Many people don't like
talking on the phone,
especially teenagers.
It's a free service, please share

What is DDA?

Developmental Disabilities Administration

***Does my Child Qualify?**

***What Services & Funding Can DDA provide?**

***When is the best time to apply?**

January 12

6:00-7:30pm

Will your child need services? If your child has developmental disabilities, they may need supported living and job coaches, assistive technology, respite services & more. Leslie and Patricia from Region 2 (Island County) DDA program will be presenting.

Email to RSVP t.wheeler-thompson@islandcountywa.gov

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Want to know more about
Parent to Parent? Check out
our website and Facebook
page.

[https://
www.islandcountywa.gov/
Humanservices/Pages/Parent-
to-Parent.aspx](https://www.islandcountywa.gov/Humanservices/Pages/Parent-to-Parent.aspx)
Various Resource Guides

[https://www.facebook.com/
islandcountyparent2parent](https://www.facebook.com/islandcountyparent2parent)

(360)632-7539 Call/Text

The following piece was written by Teresa Fair-Field, Kindering Occupational Therapist (OT), about dealing with sensory processing disorder (SPD) during the holiday season for children who celebrate Christmas as well as many other holidays. Kindering therapists address sensory processing issues and a number of developmental challenges every day. For more information, visit kindering.org.

Taming the Grinch in your House

by Teresa Fair-Field

**While reading The Grinch (who) Stole Christmas one night,
My son on my lap, and the tree, all a-light,
I pondered the Grinch at holiday time,
Hating the noise, the singing, the standing in line.**

**The Dr. (Seuss) said he saw no reason for it....
His head, or his heart? His shoes, or their fit?
It sounded familiar, this dilemma to me,
Then it came to me suddenly—he's got SPD!**

**I saw it so clearly, as nothing before,
Hiding up on the mountain, behind his closed door.
It made so much sense, his ears that were ringing,
His disgust with the Beast, and for all the Who's singing.**

**He wasn't really stealing, what he filled in his pack,
He was just trying to contain what he couldn't hack.
While he surely wasn't making all the best choices,
It's the best he could do amongst all the voices!**

**"Do this." "Do that." "Go here." "Go there."
"Big smile. Now sit still in your chair!"
Grandmother's perfume. Granddaddy's cologne.
Having to wear itchy clothing, and talk on the phone.**

**January, February, March, and the rest....
They know what to do. They've passed all the tests.
Then come Octobers...Novembers...December.
And all the routines get put in a blender.**

**Costumes, and crowds, adult expectations,
Lacking a schedule on family vacations.
The moral of this yule tale is a cinch,
There's more than meets the eye to this Grinch.**

**So what he actually learned
On the mountain that day,
That helped him feel able
To come to Who-ville and play,**

**Is to take Christmas joy
In short, manageable doses.
A little bit at a time,
Like the O.T. proposes.**

**So happy holiday time—
To each, every one.
Remember there's always more than
One way to have fun.**

Keeping the Holidays Sensory-Sensitive

Be sensory-sensitive

If your child is accustomed to strong smells such as cooking, candles, perfumes, and incense as part of your daily routine then you may not need to make any adjustments. However, many families have holiday rituals and activities that are unique to this time of year that may be overwhelming for the sensitive child who may not be used to them or find them as pleasant. Depending on your family, you may choose to switch to unscented products, or to ask visiting guests to limit perfumes and fragrances. Alternatively, it may be easier for your child to have a gradual immersion to holiday sights and smells. Rather than putting up decorations and fragrances all at once, consider making gradual changes to the child's environment, and include them in the process. Children who are sensitive respond better when they are actively participating in a sensory experience. Sensory 'surprises' are almost never well received.

Don't expect a performance

Often we expect our child to do something or show off a new skill for others, and we are always excited to brag about our child's accomplishments, having worked so hard on them through the year! Most children resist 'performing,' even if it is a skill they know well. If there's something you are excited to show off at holiday time, take a series of videos of your child throughout the month when they are in familiar settings and with expected others. Ask their teacher or therapist, in the playroom or in class, or another parent in the home setting to help facilitate. Then, you can brag about your child's new skills and accomplishments without creating frustrating expectations when the child is not able to do it on demand.

Allow a motor break

Your child may need an occasional outdoor break before, during, and after holiday or religious activities. Remember what your therapist has suggested be done on a typical day—your child's 'sensory diet.' Your child will still need those experiences (and maybe even more frequently) at a holiday event where behavioral expectations are high, and the sensory demands are significant. Bundle up and go outside!

Look for 'heavy work' and 'special jobs'

The inside and outside world at holiday time is remarkably beautiful, but everything seems to be 'look but don't touch.' Try and think ahead to places you are going with your child and prep in advance some (unbreakable!) ways your child can participate. Maybe a pinecone, or a mini pine stem can be a fidget toy. Perhaps your child can push in the chairs. Or look for a durable battery-operated light, strobe, or lantern that your child can safely activate, and make doing so your child's special job.

Touch and hugs

Some children prefer to initiate touch and hugs, and can have strong reactions if they are approached for hugs that they did not seek out. While it can be uncomfortable to discuss with family members who are visiting, it can be equally hard to explain a child's strong reaction when the hug is not well received. By discussing this in advance with visiting family, a family member may forget and initiate hugs anyway, but will have a better understanding when they have a strong reaction. High fives and fist bumps are usually in safe personal space and frequently taught by the therapy team. If your child is new to high fives and misses the connection, it's best to distract the adult rather than force the child's participation.

We wish you a happy and safe holiday season filled with family, friends and memory-making adventures!

Kinderling therapists address sensory processing issues and a number of developmental challenges every day. The following material was written by Teresa Fair-Field, Kinderling Occupational Therapist (OT), about dealing with sensory processing disorder (SPD) during the holiday season for children who celebrate Christmas as well as many other holidays.

Seizure First Aid

Stay with the person

Time the seizure

Protect from injury

Loosen anything tight around the neck

DO NOT restrain the person

DO NOT put anything in the mouth

Roll the person on his/her side as the seizure subsides

After the seizure, talk to the person reassuringly

SUPPORT EPILEPSY AWARENESS

facebook.com/theepilepsynetwork

Did you know that people with ASD also have a higher percentage of seizure diagnosis?

What percentage of individuals with ASD also have epilepsy? The pooled prevalence of epilepsy was **21.5%** in those with autism and intellectual disability, compared with 8% in those with autism who did not have intellectual disability.

Seizures In Autism

Seizures are relatively common among individuals with autism spectrum disorders (ASD). While 1-2% of children in the general population develop epilepsy, the prevalence of epilepsy in ASD is much higher, with estimates varying from 5% to 38%.

Have you heard about absent seizures?

Some individuals with ASD develop seizures in childhood, some at puberty, and some in adulthood. Although the prevalence of seizures by age is not well studied, recent studies suggest the risk remains high into adulthood.

It is noteworthy that specific subgroups within autism have a higher risk of developing seizures and epilepsy. Namely, individuals with comorbid intellectual disabilities, genetic abnormalities, and/or brain malformations.

The most concerning issue is the association between seizures with the increased mortality and morbidity among individuals with autism. For adults with autism, they are the leading cause of premature death.

<https://tacanow.org/family-resources/seizures/>

Lifeline Supports for Affordable Communications

Washington Lifeline Program provide financial assistance to low-income Washington residents and help ensure that they can afford telephone service, either through a traditional telephone company or through a qualified wireless provider.

Do You Qualify for Lifeline Washington?

To qualify for Lifeline Washington you must be enrolled in a qualifying social service program :

- Medicaid
- Food Stamps
- Temporary Cash Assistance (TCA)
- Supplemental Security Income (SSI)
- Federal Public Housing Assistance (Section 8)
- Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP)
- National School Free Lunch Program
- **OR your income must be below 150% of the federal poverty guidelines.**

If you think you may qualify, **please call 1-800-366-8201 or 1-244-1111**

<http://www.lifelineprogram.org/lifeline-washington/>



New Option in Washington State starting January 2022



Ready, Set, KNOW...

Supported Decision-Making

Understanding choices, and making decisions for yourself with the support you need.

What is Supported Decision-Making (SDM)?

SDM is an alternative to guardianship. It allows people with disabilities to choose persons close to them to help them gather and understand information, make decisions, and communicate those decisions to others. It ensures a person's right to make their own important life decisions and to have their decisions respected with the support of people they choose.

How Does It Work in Washington State?

In 2020, our state passed a law that formalizes Supported Decision-Making as an alternative to guardianship. The law gives adults with disabilities the right to enter into a Supported Decision-Making Agreement with another adult(s) of their choice* who will provide the person with the support they want.



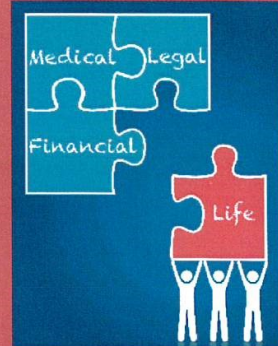
The law does not become effective until January 2022, but anyone can create a Supported Decision-Making agreement right now.

What Does an Agreement Include?

- ⚙ **The names of the adult** who will be supported and the person(s) who will support them.* Both the adult with a disability and their supporter(s) must sign the agreement in front of two witnesses and/or a notary public.
- ⚙ **The kind of decisions the adult wants help with**, including decisions about where they live, where they work, how they spend their time, or how they manage their health care and finances.
- ⚙ **The kind of help the adult wants when making a decision**, including help with gathering information, understanding options, or communicating their own choices.
- ⚙ **(Optional) Limited decision-making power** to their supporter by using other guardianship alternatives in addition to a supportive decision-making agreement, including a Power of Attorney for health care and/or financial decisions, as well as Representative Payee to manage Social Security benefits.

A Supported Decision-Making Agreement can be changed or ended by the adult with a disability at any time.

**In order to act as a supporter, people chosen must not fall into a category listed in [RCW 11.130.730](#).*



STEP BY STEP



CHOOSE the supporter(s) you want to help you make decisions.



MEET to talk about the kinds of decisions and help you want and need.



MAKE AN AGREEMENT that spells out how you will be supported. Be sure to sign release of information if you want your supporter(s) to communicate with others on your behalf.



SIGN THE SDM AGREEMENT. The agreement must be signed by both you and your supporter(s) in front of two witnesses and/or a notary public. The agreement can be changed or ended by you or your supporter(s) at any time.



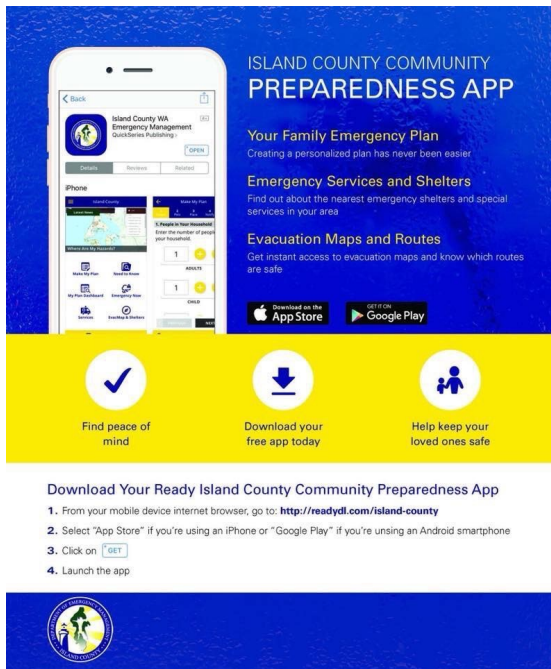
Additional Resources

National Resource Center for Supported Decision-Making: supporteddecisionmaking.org

Northwest Justice Project: nwjustice.org

Washington Law Help: WashingtonLawHelp.org

The season of storms and power outages is upon us. Did you know that DSHS will help replace spoiled food for those who have food benefits? It is called Disaster Food Benefits. The application needs to be made within 10 days. <https://www.dshs.wa.gov/esa/benefit-issuances-and-use-benefits/replacement>



FOOD SAFETY TIPS

DURING OUTAGES



Keep fridge and freezer closed as much as possible.

If freezer 1/2 full: food lasts about 24 hours; if full: lasts about 48 hours.



Use: perishable foods first, then foods from freezer, then non-perishable foods and staples.

If power is out for longer than a day, fill a cooler with ice for freezer foods.



ComEd
An Exelon Company

Special Olympics of Washington

<http://specialolympicswashington.org/>



Special Olympics programs for children and adults with intellectual disabilities who love sports and want the challenge of competing with their peers. The programs run year round offering competition in several sports. The goal is to provide a physical fitness with an emphasis on sportsmanship, friendships, and FUN!

South Whidbey Coordinator –Mike Etzell (360)678-7883 (Basketball)

North Whidbey Coordinator – Chris Becker (360)320-2549 wispecialolympics@gmail.com (Bowling, Basketball, Track, Cycling Bocce Ball)

Stanwood Regional Coordinator - Punkie Doyle snohomishad@outlook.com

Basketball Season is starting in December. Don't miss out. Athletes ages 8 & up. Fun for the whole family.

Island County Parent to Parent

Support & Resources for Special Needs Families in Island County

Tiffany Wheeler-Thompson ,Coordinator
PO BOX 5000 Coupeville, WA 98239
(360)632-7539 call/text
t.wheeler-thompson@islandcountwa.gov



**Check us out on Facebook for up-to-date resources, information and activities **

www.facebook.com/islandcountyparent2parent

We have resource guides on our website:

- *Island County Parent to Parent Disability Resource Guide
- *Parent to Parent Autism Resource Guide
- *Island County Behavioral Health Resource Guide.

<https://www.islandcountywa.gov/Humanservices/Pages/Parent-to-Parent.aspx>

